So You're

40!

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So You're 40!

A Handbook for the Newly Middle-aged



Mike Haskins & Clive Whichelow

INTRODUCTION

So you've made it! You're in your forties!

Congratulations!

Finally, you're a proper grown-up.

OK, in many parts of the world and at many previous ages in history, 40 would represent your total life expectancy.

But don't worry about those doom-mongers who tell you it's all downhill physically and mentally from now on. What the hell do those so-called fully qualified doctors and other medical experts know anyway?

And don't worry that even though you've hit 40, deep down inside you know you haven't really matured one iota since you were fifteen.

Life, they say, begins at 40. Obviously that's blatantly untrue. But it is a thing people (often around the age of 40) say to one another.

You've got everything to look forward to, they say. Obviously that's blatantly untrue as well. Realistically speaking you've got about half of everything to look forward to.

But seeing as you're probably thinking you've reached 40 without anything much ever happening to you, you can now get on with the best half of your life armed with this little book – the ideal primer to acclimatise you to what is surely destined to be the greatest decade of your entire life.


GO AWAY...
...I'M FAULTY!



TURNING 40 – SOME OF THE BASIC MYTHS YOU WILL BE TOLD

Life begins – well your sex life certainly doesn't.



Maturity has at last made you a fount of knowledge and wisdom. What a pity no one's the least bit interested in listening to you any more.

You're now at an age when young people will flock to you and look up to you with awe and respect – this will only happen if you're their drug dealer.



You'll be at the peak of your career – this is hard to believe when you're stuck in a dull, dead-end office job surrounded by idiots.



Now you're 40 you have the face you deserve – if so, I'd demand a retrial.

By this stage in your life you will realise you have met your perfect partner and soulmate – unfortunately you lost contact with them over 15 years ago when you shacked up with the no-hoper you currently share your life with.



THINGS YOU CAN NEVER NOW DO

 Become a rock star

 Play in the Premiership

 Begin a career as a model

 Regain the waist size you had when you were 18

 Die young and have a good-looking corpse

 Regain the ability to bite your own toenails

 Grow out of your problems

DRESS CODE FOR THE OVER 40s – SOME DO'S & DON'TS



Do learn to laugh at yourself – at least you can beat everyone else to it.

Don't wear anything beige or woollen.



Don't try and squeeze into any trousers you have owned for more than two years – not only will you look ridiculous, there will also be a significant chance of asphyxiation.



Don't think anyone wants to see your midriff.



Don’t turn to transvestism at this stage of your life – it will only emphasise any problems you have.

Don't wear anything that will let people see what you really look like. Remember – the truth is never pretty.



Don't grow a beard bristling with grey hairs (particularly if you're a woman).



CULTURE CONVERTER

When speaking with people younger than yourself it's no use talking about things that happened before they were born, they won't have a clue what you're on about. So here is a handy culture converter to translate your cultural reference points to their equivalent:

Category	Your Age	People Who Are Still Old But Irritatingly Younger Than You	Young People	Very Young People
Pop/rock band	U2	Oasis	McFly	The Tweenies
Heart-throb	Simon Le Bon	Robbie Williams	Justin Timberlake	Bob the Builder
Pin-up	Samantha Fox	Melinda Messenger	Jordan	Barbie
Daft fashion	New Romantic kilt	Acid house baby's dummy	Hoodie	Baby's dummy (for more obvious reasons)
Big film	*Superman*	*Home Alone*	*Pirates of the Caribbean*	*Superman* (damn these remakes)
Football hero	Kevin Keegan	Gary Lineker	David Beckham	Wayne Rooney

WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE CURRENTLY IN THEIR 40s

Madonna, Prince Andrew, Prince Edward, J. K. Rowling, Brad Pitt, Johnny Depp, Tom Cruise, Hugh Grant, Demi Moore, Cindy Crawford, Ben Stiller, Emma Thompson, Keanu Reeves, Halle Berry, Brooke Shields, Kiefer Sutherland, Elizabeth Hurley, Shania Twain, Sarah Jessica Parker, Courtney Love, Janet Jackson, Michael Jackson, Little (now not so little) Jimmy Osmond, 80 per cent of the cast of *Desperate Housewives*, at least 50 per cent of the cast of *Friends*, Matthew Fox (you know, from *Lost*)... Yes – OK – they all probably have more money than you...

TIPS ON HOW TO LOOK YOUNGER THAN YOU ACTUALLY ARE

Learn to send a text message in less than twenty minutes.



Encourage your acne to flare up again.



Attach a very large bulldog clip to the back of your head to help smooth out all the wrinkles.

Buy a load of new clothes from a really trendy shop then wear the bag over your head.



Make sure your children walk at least ten paces behind you.

In order to stay looking youthfully healthy avoid the following: all-night parties, drinking, drugs and one-night stands. So basically in order to stay looking young you're going to have to avoid all the things young people do.



GIVEAWAYS THAT WILL TELL PEOPLE YOU ARE OVER 40



You end text messages with
'Yours sincerely'.



When someone asks you to a burn a CD,
you reach for the matches.



You get excited about a sale at your
local DIY store weeks before it starts.

When you bend your knees it sounds like someone has just popped a roll of bubble wrap.

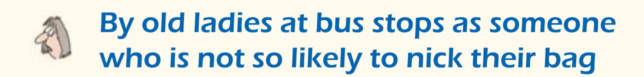


You use catchphrases from *Fawlty Towers*.



You complain about graffiti.

A GUIDE TO HOW OTHERS WILL NOW PERCEIVE YOU



- By old ladies at bus stops as someone who is not so likely to nick their bag



- By small children as someone who remembers the Second World War
- By older people as someone who now agrees with their more extreme opinions
- As too old to be stopped and searched by police
- As a source of pocket money
- As harmless but a bit boring

NAMES YOU CAN NOW EXPECT TO BE CALLED ON A REGULAR BASIS

Sir/Madam

Grumpy old man/woman

Little Johnny's mum/Little Johnny's dad

'Dear complainant'

Hey you, walrus nostrils!

NAMES YOU CAN NOW EXPECT NEVER TO BE CALLED AGAIN

Sonny/Girlie

Young man/Young lady

Up-and-coming

A bright young thing

Dude/Babe

Totty

THE MAIN THINGS IN YOUR LIFE YOU WILL NOW LOOK FORWARD TO



- Going to see your favourite band who have come back on a reunion tour



- No longer having to stay in fashion



- A lovely cup of tea
- No longer having your libido dictate your every decision in life
- Another lovely cup of tea
- And best of all – only ten years now till you can book a Saga holiday!

THE MAIN THINGS IN YOUR LIFE IT'S LESS EASY TO LOOK FORWARD TO


Going to see your favourite band who have come back on a reunion tour and realising you didn't actually like them that much at the time


Your first tooth being crowned


The first time someone just assumes you have children


Being forced to take sides during friends' messy divorce proceedings



The first time clothes from your youth come back into fashion



The first time your children announce they've been studying something that happened in your lifetime in the history lesson at school



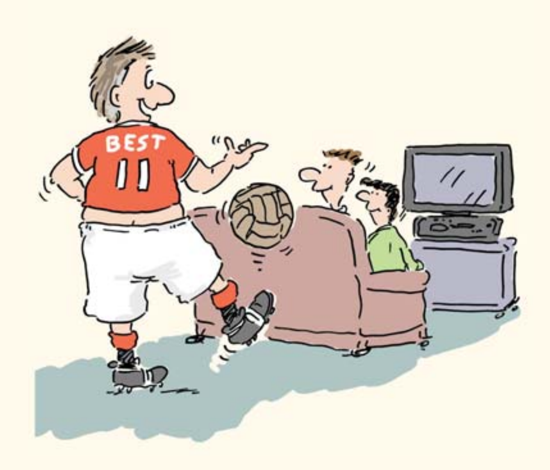
CONVERSING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE (PART 1)

What you say and what they hear

'How did your exams go?' = 'Let me tell you how much harder exams were in my day.'



'Get your feet off the bus seat.' = 'I am a sad old git with nothing better to think about.'



'OK, kids. Who wants a game of football?'
= 'Let me show off in front of you and your friends for ten minutes before I keel over and lie on the ground gasping for breath.'

'So, what sort of music do you like?' = 'I desperately need to find out what's cool because I'm completely out of touch with what's going on.'



STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

If you're 40 you have lived around 14,610 days or 2,087 weeks.



If you've managed to get a decent night's sleep of between seven and eight hours each night, you have so far spent 12.5 years of your life just lying there snoring and dribbling.

If you have watched the average amount of 2.5 hours' television a day since you were four years old, this would represent a total of over 3.75 years of your entire life spent plonked in front of the box.



If you've been in full-time employment since you were 21, you will have so far spent over six years of your life at work – if you've spent an hour and a half each day getting to and from work that's another entire year gone.

If you have spent a modest average of £20 a week on alcohol since your eighteenth birthday this would mean that to date you have wasted almost £23,000 giving yourself hangovers. If you've spent an equally modest eight hours a week in the pub (which would be pretty good going if you only ever spend twenty quid, you skinflint) that would represent an entire year of your life spent in the pub.

So if you've spent 12.5 years sleeping, 3.75 years watching TV, 1 year in the pub, 6 years at work and 1 year getting to work, that means your actual life has so far lasted only 15.75 years – happy 15.75th birthday! Isn't that a great age to be!



PEOPLE WHO ACHIEVED GREAT THINGS AFTER THEY WERE 40

Tony Blair didn't become prime minister until the age of 43 – so you've got another three years in which to achieve it!



Tom Jones managed a complete career revival at the age of 47 – mind you, he did have a career to revive.

Henry Ford didn't start the Ford Motor Company until he was 40 – but you'll have to think of your own idea.



Alfred Hitchcock wasn't nominated for an Oscar until he was 40. It was for *Rebecca* which was also his first film made in Hollywood.

Roald Dahl's most successful children's book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, wasn't published until he was 48.



Sir Elton John was well over 40 before he had a full head of hair (only joking, Reg).

NOW YOU'RE 40 THE FOLLOWING WILL BE YOUR NATURAL ENEMIES

Young people

Do-gooders

Anyone in a bigger car than yours

Gravity



Next door's cat

A LIST OF CONTROVERSIAL OPINIONS YOU WILL NOW BE LIKELY TO HOLD

'They should bring back the workhouse/ national service/birching/Mrs Thatcher.'



'Anyone caught wearing a baseball cap while at the wheel of a car should be stripped of their licence.'

'I'm not saying stop immigration but for every one person we let in why not send a flabby, tattooed, work-shy English lout to Afghanistan by way of a swap?'



'I'm not saying bring back hanging but why don't we put long-term prisoners into artificial comas? Then we could just keep them in a drawer somewhere.'



'Pubs should be for drinking in and having a quiet conversation, not big-screen football, karaoke and flipping quiz nights.'



'The police should be entitled to use Tasers on anyone who swears in a public place.'

CONVERSING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE (PART 2)

What they say and what you hear

'Mama/Dada' = 'Your life is now effectively over.'



'Mummy/Daddy! Will you have a game on the PlayStation with me?' = 'Mummy/Daddy! Can I thrash you on the PlayStation?'

'Mummy/Daddy! Where do babies come from?' = 'Mummy/Daddy! I'd like to watch you squirm with embarrassment for the next ten minutes.'



'Trick or treat' = 'Give me some sweets or me and Dracula here'll mug you.

'Daddy, who were those funny ladies you were looking at on the computer?' = 'Daddy, would you like to consider putting my pocket money up a bit?'



THINGS YOU CAN NOW GET AWAY WITH THAT YOU COULDN'T PREVIOUSLY



Pulling the bin out to the front of the house while dressed only in your pyjamas



Talking to an eighteen-year-old without them thinking you're trying to chat them up



Calling assistants 'young man', 'young lady' etc. when making a complaint in a shop



Buying a computer game and saying it's for your kids



Demanding a refund



Feigning a mild heart attack to gain an advantage during a family dispute



Expecting a head start when in the parents' race at the school sports day

THINGS YOU SHOULD HAVE ACHIEVED BY NOW



- Being able to say 'Uranus' without giggling and making a puerile joke

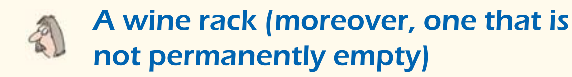


- Wearing sunglasses only when it's sunny
- The ability to change a washer in one of your taps
- The ability to have a good time regardless of how miserable the rest of your family are looking during a day out
- No longer caring what other people think of you or what you look like

THINGS YOU ARE NOW LIKELY TO HAVE IN YOUR HOME



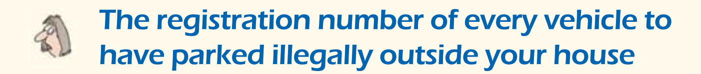
A copy of *The National Trust Handbook*



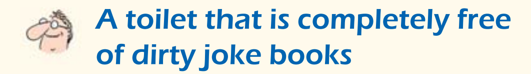
A wine rack (moreover, one that is not permanently empty)



The same music collection in at least three different formats



The registration number of every vehicle to have parked illegally outside your house



A toilet that is completely free of dirty joke books



A pet that doesn’t have a name like Adolf, Ziggy or ‘Dog’



A novelty singing Santa



A packet of moist toilet tissue



A tyre pressure gauge

THINGS THAT YOU WILL TAKE A SUDDEN INTEREST IN



Your cholesterol level

The fact that the BBC also has Radios 2, 3 and 4

Bleeding your radiators

Itemised bills

Botox

Adverts containing the words 'younger', 'rejuvenate' and 'free'

TV programmes about the seventies



The best route by road from your house to anywhere else in the country

CONVERSING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE (PART 3)

Now you are 40 you are entitled to share words of wisdom with your juniors commencing with one or more of the following phrases…

'In my day…'



'Yes, I've learnt a thing or two in my time…'

'I've been around the block a few times...'



'Take a tip from me...'



'You see, the thing about modern music – if you can call it music...'

'I'll tell you a proper car – The Austin Maxi...'



'I didn't get where I am today without...'



THINGS YOU'LL FEEL SMUG ABOUT


Still having 20/20 vision


Having a waist size lower than your age


Your no claims bonus


The amount you recycle compared to the amount next door have sticking out of the top of their wheelie bin


Being old enough to remember the 'Hurricane of '87'

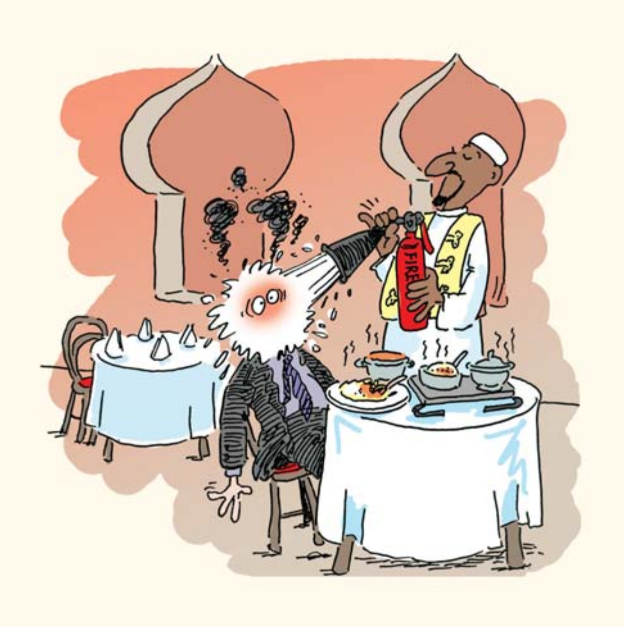

Making it through the night without having to get up and go to the toilet


Having a house that's worth twice as much as when you bought it

HOORAY! THINGS YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO DO AGAIN



- Sleep in a muddy field at Glastonbury
- Stay up all night at a party
- Pretend to like tequila slammers
- Know who the latest hot bands are
- Pretend to get high on a joint made out of Earl Grey tea and bran flakes



Eat the hottest curry in the restaurant – with extra chillies

BOO! THINGS YOU WON'T BE DOING AGAIN



Admiring your body in a full-length mirror (a full-width mirror might be more like it)



Having to ask for a second paper cup at the sperm donor clinic



Wondering who your Valentine's Day cards are from



The Funky Chicken



Loving them and leaving them (you will not have the energy to do both)



Attending rock concerts without feeling just a little bit self-conscious

SHATTERING MOMENTS TO COME SOON



Your first grey hair



A politician who is younger than you



A prime minister who is younger than you



Bumping into old teachers and realising you spent seven years being terrified of nothing



Realising many people born in the 1980s are now in full-time employment, some of them earning significantly more than you do



Your first grey pubic hair

THINGS TO EXPECT FOR YOUR NEXT BIRTHDAY



Comfy slippers



Something boring but practical



Some worthless object made by one of your children



A supposedly amusing book about life in your forties



A hand-knitted jumper

EXPRESSIONS THAT WILL DATE YOU

Record player

Yuppie

Sloane Ranger

Nanoo nanoo

Watch out there's a Humphrey about

Loadsamoney

If you see Sid, tell him...

Double seat double seat, got to
get a double seat...

GADGETS THAT YOU MAY STILL OWN

A personal stereo with a cassette in it

A camera with a film in it

A soufflé set

An electric carving knife

A phone with a wire dangling from it

A television with buttons on the front to change channels

A car that you can only open with a key

BEING 40 IS...

... being too old for *Hollyoaks* but too young for *The Archers*.



... being too old for nightclubs but too young for nightcaps.

… being too old for hair gel but too young for hair dye.



… being too old to watch *Countdown* in an ironic way and too young to watch it for the right reason.

... being too old to be hip and too young for a hip replacement.



... being too old to be immature but too young to have gone gaga – so you've got no excuse when you act like a pillock.

… being too old to be looked after by your parents and too young to be looked after by your kids – you're on your own, mate!



THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT NOW HAVE IN YOUR HOME

Your own PlayStation

Love letters from all your exes

Your old collection of Smash Hits magazine

A whoopee cushion/talking toilet roll holder/
pretend dog poo



Your own superhero outfit (no – not even a crotchless one)

AARGHH! THINGS YOU NEVER THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN

You get asked to play for a veterans' sports team.



Your new boss is younger than you.

You have finally turned into your mum/dad.



You have regular sessions with a physiotherapist/chiropractor/shrink.

YOUR NEW OUTLOOK ON LIFE

Your idea of a busy weekend is doing the shopping *AND* washing the car.



Your idea of a 'youngster' is anyone under 35.

Your idea of bliss is getting through a whole bath without anyone wanting to use the toilet.



Your idea of rebellion is refusing to have a shop loyalty card.



Your idea of getting completely off your face is lying on your back in bed.



Your idea of life in the fast lane is queuing at the 'Five items or fewer' checkout in the supermarket.

YOUR NEW WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS



Going to the bottle bank



Changing your library books



Buying a new plant for the garden



The new edition of the *Radio Times*



Feeding next door's cat while the owners are away on holiday



Seeing what free CD comes with the Sunday paper

THINGS YOU WILL DESPERATELY TRY TO AVOID



Wearing glasses

Having lots of older friends

Cardigans

Going up yet another jeans size

Admitting you need to sit down in the pub

THOSE WERE THE DAYS! NOSTALGIA FOR THE OVER 40s



When STD was a new telephone system

When a chat room was the front bar of the local pub

When a happy slapper was a girl who enjoyed herself a lot

When a mobile was what you had hanging from your bedroom ceiling

When the only radical cleric around was Ian Paisley

THINGS YOU SHOULD NO LONGER HAVE IN YOUR CAR



- Fluffy dice/nodding dogs/cute cuddly toys – you're supposed to be a grown-up!

- Half a bottle of Scotch in the glove compartment

- A baseball bat – unless you are one of the half-dozen people in the UK who actually play baseball

- Underwear belonging to someone whose name you can no longer remember



An aggressive rear-window sticker – You can only get away with 'Back off – bitch driving' when you're 22



A driving instructor

THINGS YOU WON'T BE DOING ON HOLIDAY ANY MORE



Wearing a swimsuit only slightly larger than an elastic band


Flaunting your body


Going straight from the nightclub to the beach


Driving at top speed in a local hire car that has no brakes


Being drunk in charge of a windsurfboard


Putting your head out of your hotel door without being daubed with factor 1,000,000 sun cream

EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE 40 – REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

You'll always be younger than Madonna and Michael Jackson.



If you ever make it onto *Big Brother* you'll be voted off mercifully quickly.

You're no longer defined by what trainers you wear.



Despite the extraordinary amount of environmental damage wreaked on it, planet earth will probably just about see you out now.



You'll never be called up into the armed forces.



You're mature at last – and if anyone disagrees you'll give them a Chinese burn.

